

Melissa Mathison Loses Battle with Neuroendocrine Cancer



1888 PressRelease - Melissa Mathison, screenwriter best known for "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," dies of neuroendocrine cancer at 65.

The Neuroendocrine Tumor Research Foundation mourns the passing of Melissa Mathison, a creative visionary and writer of some of our best-loved movies. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and loved ones.

Melissa Mathison's untimely passing reminds us that finding cures is the ultimate weapon in the battle against cancer. Now is the time to shine the spotlight on neuroendocrine cancers and accelerate funding for research in pursuit of cures and effective treatments.

Neuroendocrine tumors (NETs) are rare and originate from specialized cells called neuroendocrine cells. These cells, which have features like nerve cells and hormone-producing cells, release hormones into the blood in response to signals from the nervous system. Neuroendocrine tumors can occur throughout the body, but primary sites include the gastrointestinal tract, pancreas, rectum, lungs, and appendix.

Over 100,000 people in the U.S. are living with neuroendocrine cancers. It is estimated that over 12,000 people are diagnosed each year, and the number of those diagnosed is increasing by more than five percent annually. The majority of all NET patients are initially misdiagnosed, and the time from onset of symptoms to proper diagnosis often exceeds five years. Many physicians and specialists are not aware of current diagnostic and treatment options. Too often, doctors still believe NETS are benign, slow growing, and do not metastasize. The most prevalent symptoms are diarrhea, constipation, flushing, abdominal pain, wheezing, heart palpitations, and blood pressure fluctuations.

The Neuroendocrine Tumor Research Foundation (NETRF) is the most focused and deliberate funder of neuroendocrine cancer research. Since its inception, the NET Research Foundation has awarded over \$10 million in large-scale, multi-year research grants to leading scientists at renowned research institutions, and is actively funding research at 7 of the top 10 U.S. cancer centers.

For more information about neuroendocrine cancer, please visit www.netrf.org or call 617-948-2514.

###